



FREDERICK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

March 11, 2020

TITLE: **Mount Saint Mary's University – Student Housing**

FILE NUMBER: **SP84-22 AP 20014, APFO 20015, FRO 20016**

REQUEST: **Site Development Plan Approval**
The Applicant is requesting Site Development Plan approval for the construction of a 7,394 sq. ft. student housing building located on the 0.18-acre portion of the overall 454.18 acre campus.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

ADDRESS/LOCATION: 9027 Alumni Court, located along Old Emmitsburg Road, north of Annandale Road
MAP/PARCEL: Tax Map 8, Parcel 48
COMP. PLAN: Institutional
ZONING: Ie – Euclidean Institutional
PLANNING REGION: Thurmont
WATER/SEWER: MU - Multi-Use (Private)

APPLICANT/REPRESENTATIVES:

APPLICANT: Mount Saint Mary's University
OWNER: - same -
ENGINEER: Frederick, Seibert, and Associates
ARCHITECT: Marotta/Main
ATTORNEY: Not Listed

STAFF: Ashley M. Moore, Principal Planner

RECOMMENDATION: **Approval**

Enclosures:

Exhibit #1 – Site Plan Renderings
Exhibit #2 – Site Elevations

STAFF REPORT

ISSUE

Development Request

The Applicant is requesting Site Development Plan approval for the construction of a 7,394 sq. ft. student housing building located on the 0.18 acre of the overall 454.18 acre campus. The proposed use being reviewed is a “**College or University**” under the heading of **Governmental and Nongovernmental Utilities** per § 1-19-5.310 of the Zoning Ordinance and is a permitted use subject to Site Development Plan approval. The “le” zoning allows for a college or university to include residential housing as a customary use.

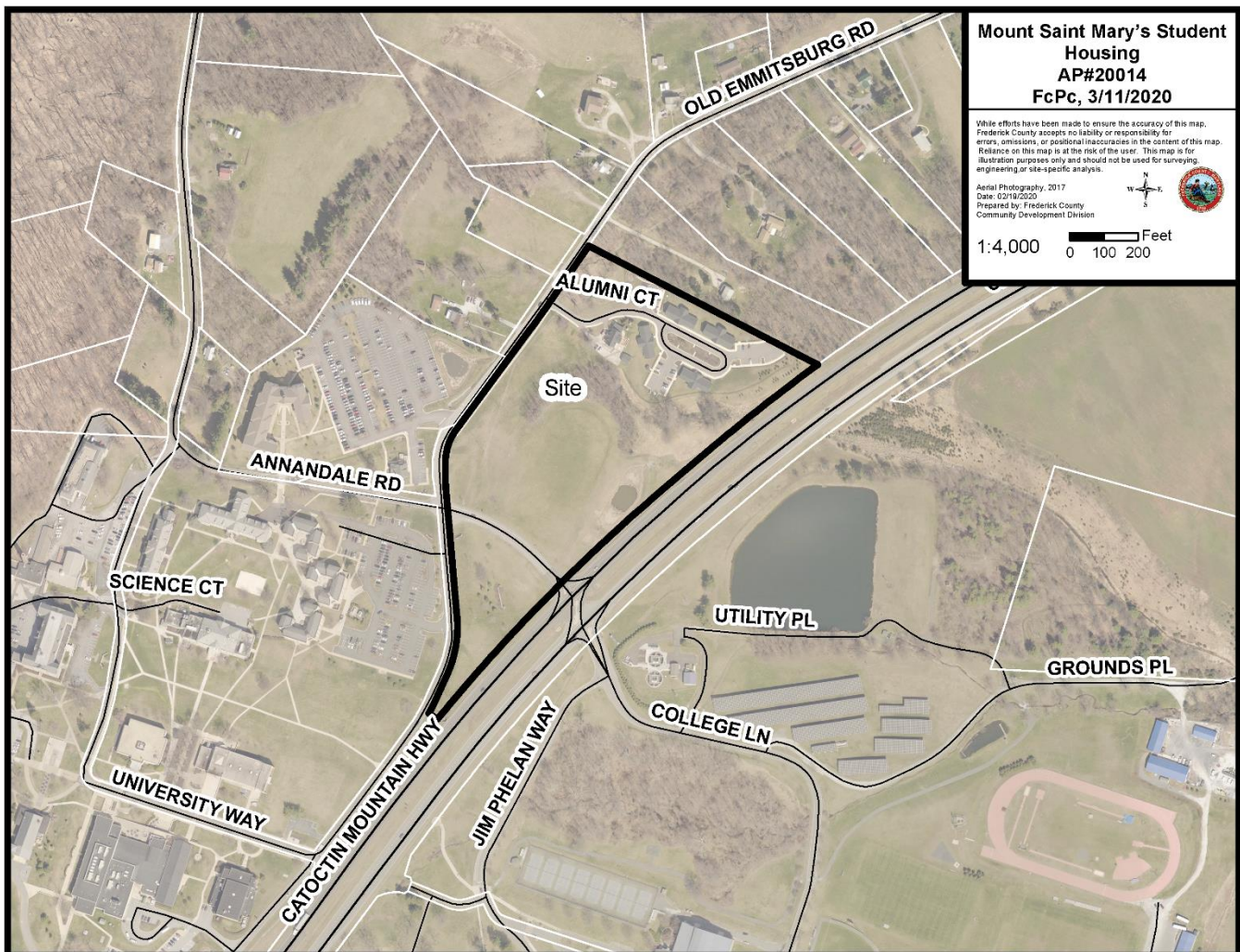
BACKGROUND

Development History

Historical aerial photos shows that a single family house with a circular driveway was in existence in 1973. In that same aerial photo was an athletic track located south of the house. The track was replaced with a rugby field. The house remains today.

Located behind the house, 5 one-story student housing buildings were approved in April 2013. Four of the student housing buildings were constructed. The purpose of this application is to obtain approval for the remaining fifth building, which is revised to two stories. See Graphic #1 below.

Graphic #1: Aerial

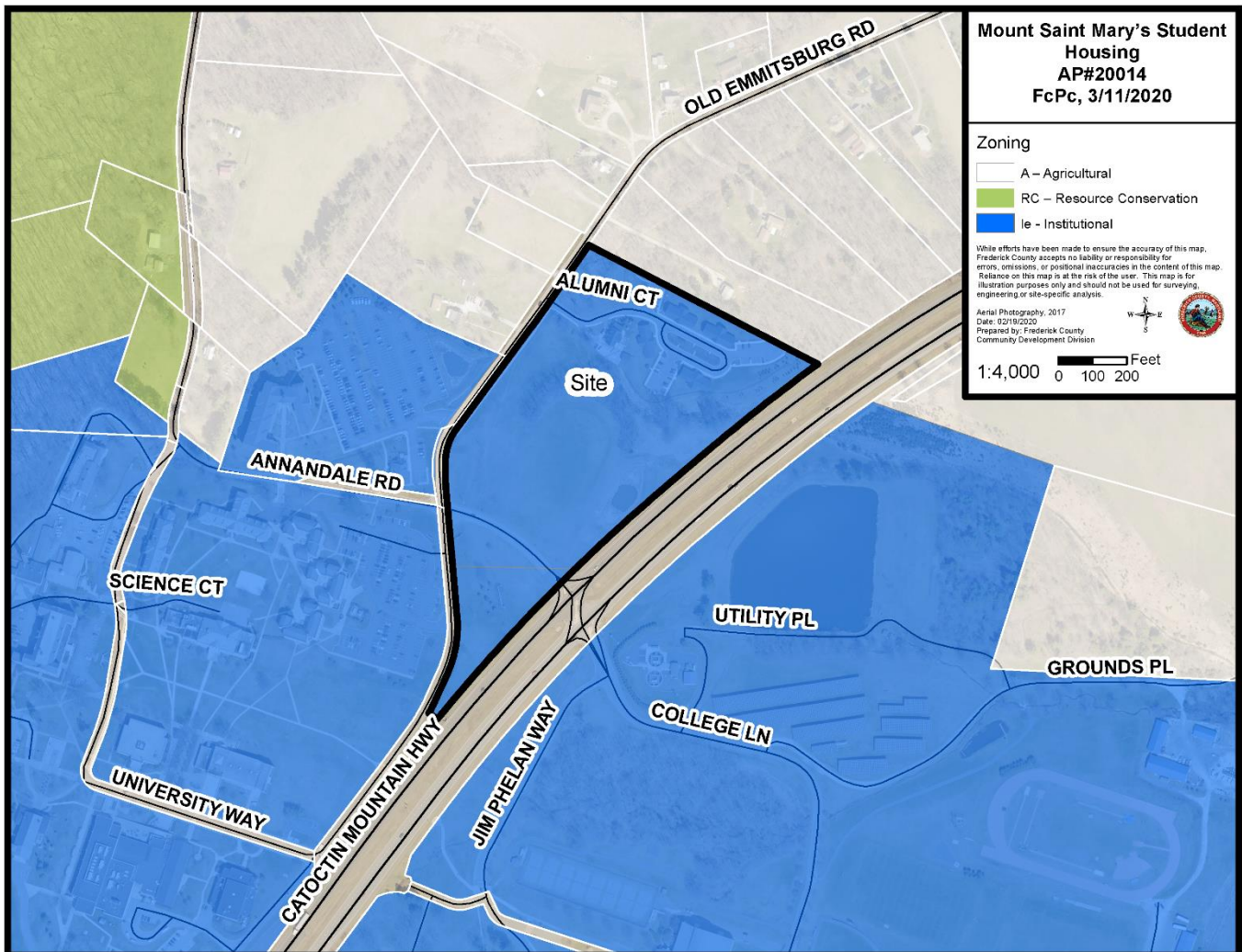


Existing Site Characteristics

The Site is zoned Ie, Euclidean Institutional with a County Comprehensive Plan land use designation of Institutional. There are two properties directly west of the Site located across Old Emmitsburg Road. One of the properties is vacant, zoned Agricultural, and owned by the university. The other property west of the Site is a residential use and is zoned Institutional. Southwest of the Site is the Mount Saint Mary's Campus.

The property directly south and east of the Site, across US Rt. 15, is a solar facility and a pond. The property is zoned institutional and owned by the university. The property north of the Site is a residential use, zoned Agricultural, and owned by the university. See Graphic #2 below.

Graphic #2: Zoning



ANALYSIS

Detailed Analysis of Findings and Conclusions

Site Development Plan Approval shall be granted based upon the criteria found in §1-19-3.300.4 Site Plan Review Approval Criteria of Chapter 1-19 (Zoning) of the Frederick County Code (the “Code”).

Site Development §1-19-3.300.4 (A): *Existing and anticipated surrounding land uses have been adequately considered in the design of the development and negative impacts have been minimized through such means as building placement or scale, landscaping, or screening, and an evaluation of lighting. Anticipated surrounding uses shall be determined based upon existing zoning and land use designations.*

Findings/Conclusions

1. Dimensional Requirements/Bulk Standards § 1-19-6.100 & 1-19-8.480:

The design requirements for the student housing are established under College/University in the “Uses Permitted in the Euclidean Institutional Zoning District” section of the Ordinance. The requirements within the Euclidean Institutional district for this use are as follows: Front Yard – 40 ft., Side Yard – 50 ft., Rear Yard – 50 ft. The minimum lot size is 5 acres (29.90 provided) and the minimum lot width is 300 ft. (note lot width provided). The maximum height requirement for proposed structures is 30 ft. The proposed student housing height is approximately 25 ft., as measured by the Ordinance. The proposed development meets all dimensional lot and building height requirements.

2. Signage §1-19-6.320: There is no existing signage on the site. No signage is being proposed.

3. Landscaping §1-19-6.400:

- **Street Trees §1-19-6.400(A):** The Ordinance requires 1 street tree per 35 linear feet of road frontage. The frontage of the portion of the property being reviewed is approximately 125 ft, which would require 3 street trees ($125 / 35 = 3.28$) along the Route 15 (Catoctin Mountain Scenic Byway). The previously approved plan carries over approximately 22 trees along the wetlands that separate the development from highway. Staff considers these trees to constitute compliance with the street tree requirement.
- **Land Use Buffering and Screening §1-19-6.400(B):** The Ordinance states “All other uses: buffering and screening for all other land uses shall be determined by the Planning Commission.” There is an existing buffer of wooded area along the northern common property line, which is in accordance with the previously approved plan. The Site is adjacent to an Agricultural zoned property with a residential use owned by the University. No additional land use buffering and screening is proposed.
- **Parking Area Buffering and Screening §1-19-6.400(C):** The existing landscaping provides parking area buffering and screening. The additional landscaping being proposed only helps with parking area buffering and screening. Staff considers both existing and proposed landscaping to meet the zoning requirements.
- **Parking Area Landscaping §1-19-6.400(D):** The Applicant is required to provide 20% canopy over the parking area with shrubs within the planting area. The existing landscaping conditions of the site meet the requirement.
- **Landscaping, Screening, or Buffering §1-19-6.400(E):** All landscape material must be maintained in a living condition. The proposed Site plan emphasizes native species and no invasive/exotic species are specified.

Mount Saint Mary’s University Student Housing

March 11, 2020

Page 4 of 10

4. **Lighting §1-19-6.500:** There will be lighting around the Site in the form of building mounted fixtures for security and emergency purposes, which are exempt for the requirements of this ordinance. A note has been placed on the plan requiring this lighting to meet the 0.50 footcandle measurement at the property line and to require lighting to be directed downward onto the site.

Transportation and Parking §1-19-3.300.4 (B): *The transportation system and parking areas are adequate to serve the proposed use in addition to existing uses by providing safe and efficient circulation, and design consideration that maximizes connections with surrounding land uses and accommodates public transit facilities. Evaluation factors include: on-street parking impacts, off-street parking and loading design, access location and design, vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation and safety, and existing or planned transit facilities.*

Findings/Conclusions

1. **Access/Circulation:** The Site has a single driveway accessed from Old Emmitsburg Road. The driveway and drive aisles circulate around the Site and is in accordance with the previously approved plan.
2. **Connectivity §1-19-6.220(F):** The University owns the two properties directly north of the Site. In the previous approved plan, the two parking lots adjacent to the northern boundary were designed for possible connections. At this time, there is no expressed desire for connections to the adjacent Site.
3. **Public Transit:** This Site is not served by public Transit.
4. **Vehicle Parking and Loading §1-19-6.200-through 1-19-6.220:**
The Ordinance requires the College/University use to provide 1 space per 4 students, which is established for all uses on the University's property. Each existing student house has a building capacity of 8 students or 2 spaces per building. The total required parking of all of the existing buildings is 8 spaces. The proposed housing has a building capacity of 29 students or 7 additional spaces. The existing and proposed housing requires 15 required spaces for the Site. The existing lot currently has 50 spaces constructed, which includes 5 handicapped spaces. No additional parking spaces are required or proposed.

Loading Spaces:

There are no loading spaces required for the student housing and none are being proposed.

5. **Pedestrian Circulation and Safety §1-19-6.220 (G):** Sidewalks exist around the student houses that lead to the larger student parking lot southwest of the site. The path also leads to a nearby financial institution and connects to the larger pedestrian network throughout the campus. No additional pedestrian connections are being proposed.
6. **Bicycle Parking §1-19-6.220 (H):** The Ordinance requires bicycle parking according to the campus plan. The existing bicycle parking from the previously approved plan satisfies that requirement.

Public Utilities §1-19-3.300.4 (C): *Where the proposed development will be served by publicly owned community water and sewer, the facilities shall be adequate to serve the proposed development. Where proposed development will be served by facilities other than publicly owned community water and sewer, the facilities shall meet the requirements of and receive approval from the Maryland Department of the Environment/the Frederick County Health Department.*

Findings/Conclusions

Private Well and Septic: The Site is served by a private water and sewer system.

Natural features §1-19-3.300.4 (D): *Natural features of the Site have been evaluated and to the greatest extent practical maintained in a natural state and incorporated into the design of the development. Evaluation factors include topography, vegetation, sensitive resources, and natural hazards.*

Findings/Conclusions

1. **Topography:** The area of the Site that will be affected by the proposed housing is relatively flat.
2. **Vegetation:** There are trees lined along the northern and upper western boundary and in the central portion of the Site, south of the existing student houses. Small trees and brush are found along the northeastern boundary adjacent to US 15.
3. **Sensitive Resources:** There are no sensitive slopes or habitats of threatened or endangered species on this Site. There is an existing stream north of the Site's entrance.
4. **Natural Hazards:** There is a Maryland DNR wetland located on the property but not in the affected area. There are wet soils on the Site and within the affected area, which affects residential structures with basements. There will not be a basement constructed as part of this development.

Common Areas §1-19-3.300.4 (E): *If the plan of development includes common areas and/or facilities, the Planning Commission as a condition of approval may review the ownership, use, and maintenance of such lands or property to ensure the preservation of such areas, property, and facilities for their intended purposes.*

Findings/Conclusions

1. **Proposed Common Area:** There are no required public common areas associated with this development.
2. **Ownership:** The Site is privately owned.

Other Applicable Regulations

Stormwater Management – Chapter 1-15.2: A previously approved stormwater management plan in conjunction with the originally approved Site Development Plan (AP #13267) covered all five buildings. No further stormwater management is required.

APFO – Chapter 1-20:

Road Improvements: This project generates less than 51 trips and is exempt from APFO – Roads, per Section 1-20-30.

Schools: The Project is non-residential and not subject to schools testing.

Water and Sewer Improvements: Site Water and Sewer Classification is Multi-Use (Private).

Period of Validity: The APFO approval is valid for three (3) years from the date of Commission approval; therefore, the APFO approval will expire on March 11, 2023

Forest Resource – Chapter 1-21: The property was previously mitigated in 2013 under AP 13269 by the purchase of banking credits and the recordation of forest conservation easements. The site of the proposed student housing building contains no forest and no specimen trees (trees 30” or greater in diameter).

Historic Preservation – Chapter 1-23: The property is visible from the U.S. 15 Catoctin Mountain National Scenic Byway and is also part of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area. Historic Preservation staff has no objection to this project.

Summary of Agency Comments

<i>Other Agency or Ordinance Requirements</i>	<i>Comment</i>
<i>Public Works Department</i>	Approved
<i>Development Review Planning:</i>	Approved
<i>Health Department</i>	Approved
<i>Office of Life Safety</i>	Approved
<i>Development Review Transportation Engineering</i>	Approved
<i>Forest Conservation (FRO)</i>	Approved
<i>Adequate Public Facilities (APFO)</i>	Approved
<i>Street Name Review</i>	Approved
<i>Historic Preservation</i>	Approved

RECOMMENDATION

Staff has no objection to approval of the Mount Saint Mary’s Student Housing Site Development Plan. If the Planning Commission approves the Site Development Plan, the Site plan is valid for a period of three (3) years from the date of Planning Commission approval (March 11, 2023).

Based upon the findings and conclusions as presented in the staff report the application meets all applicable zoning, APFO, and FRO requirements once the following conditions are met:

Staff-proposed conditions of approval:

1. Maryland Department of Environment must verify that sewer and water capacity is adequate prior to building permit approval.
2. The Applicant shall comply with all Staff and agency comments through the completion of the plan.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

MOTION TO APPROVE

I move that the Planning Commission **APPROVE** Site Plan SP-84-22, AP 20014 (APFO 20015; FRO 20016) including APFO approval, **with conditions** as listed in the staff report for the proposed Site plan, based on the findings and conclusions of the staff report and the testimony, exhibits, and documentary evidence produced at the public meeting.

Exhibit #1 - Site Plan Renderings



Exhibit #2 - Site Elevations

